

## Home Security In The Last Six Months...

Did you leave the front door or garage door unlocked while you made a quick trip to the grocery store?  
Was it too much trouble to check the meter reader's identification before letting him in?  
Did you forget to tell a neighbor that you were going away for the weekend?

If you answered "yes" to any of these questions, you are making it easier for a thief to work in your community. Good locks, simple precautions, neighborly alertness and common sense can help prevent most property crimes.



### Locks, Doors, and Windows

Install good deadbolt locks in your doors (not the spring-latch ones with the key in the knob) and use them! About 33 percent of burglars get in through unlocked doors and windows!

Avoid door locks that can be manipulated by breaking glass or door panels to reach inside.

Make sure outside doors, including the one between your house and garage, are solid 1-3/4 inch metal or wood and fit tightly in their frames. Hinges should be on the inside.

Secure sliding glass doors with commercially available locks, with a rigid wooden dowel or other device in the track, or with a nail inserted through a hole drilled in the sliding door frame and projecting into the fixed frame.

Lock double-hung windows by sliding a bolt or nail through a hole drilled at a downward angle in each top corner of the inside sash, or buy window key locks at a hardware store. Consider grills for basement or street-level windows.

Windows that cannot be seen from the street because of location or fences are a favorite place of entry for burglars. These windows should be locked with secure locks, burglar resistant glass or releasable iron bars.

Keep the garage door closed and locked. This helps protect valuable property stored in your garage and prevents access to interior doors to the house. An open garage is an invitation for a burglar.

Garage windows should be locked and reinforced with mesh screening. They should be covered with shades or blinds so a burglary cannot look inside for possible loot or for an indication of someone being home.

### Roof Openings

All skylights, roof vent openings or any other potential ceiling entrance should be reinforced with metal bars or heavy screens.

### Outside

Trim back shrubbery that hides doors or windows. Cut back tree limbs that could help a thief climb into a second story window. Plant thorny or aggressive plants under windows and along fences.

Make sure all porches, entrances, and yards are well-lighted.

Make sure your house number is clearly visible from the street during day- and night-time, and the alley if you have one, to help police and fire departments respond to emergency calls.

Light the outside of your house. Exterior lights are important, especially near doors, windows and carports. **Criminals do not light light and will avoid it.**

Your mailbox should be located so it can be seen and observed by your neighbors. Put only your street address on the box, not your name.

Storage sheds or outside buildings should be securely locked. Any tools or equipment which could help a burglar break into your home should be locked in the shed or stored in a locked garage.

Fences make it harder for a burglary to carry away large items, but are only effective **if the gates are locked**. Gates should **always** be locked.

All sides of your home should be protected by security lighting. Attractive, low-wattage lighting may be an effective way to keep intruders from getting interested.

Help keep your neighborhood in good shape. Dark alleys, litter, and run-down areas attract crime.

### Key Sense

Do not hide house keys in mailboxes, planters, or under doormats. Give a duplicate key to a trusted friend or neighbor in case you are locked out.

Do not put any personal identification on key rings.

Leave only your ignition key with service mechanics and parking garage attendants.

If you lose the keys to your home, or move into a new home, change the locks immediately.

## Answering The Door

Install a peephole or wide-angle viewer in all entry doors so you can see who is outside without opening the door. A short chain between the door and the jamb is not a good substitute because it can be broken easily.

Install a security screen door and keep it locked at all times.

Don't open the door to anyone you do not know without first verifying that person's identity.

## Answering The Telephone

Don't give any information to "wrong number" callers. Ask what number they were dialing.

Check references of any person calling about a survey, credit check or charity before volunteering information. Offer to call the person back instead of responding immediately.

Hang up immediately on any threatening or harassing calls.

If the caller persists, call police and the phone company.

## Going Away?

*Burglars hope to avoid confrontations, so make your home look occupied!*

Leave lights on and the radio playing, preferably a radio talk show, when you go out.

Keep your garage door closed and locked.

Use inexpensive timing devices to turn inside lights and radio on and off at different times.

If no one will be at home for more than a few days, arrange to have someone pick up the mail and newspapers.

## Warning Signs

A sign indicating an alarm system has been installed, that a dangerous dog is present, or other warning signs can be a good deterrent. To be effective, signs must be of sufficient size to attract attention and be in a conspicuous place.

## For Added Protection

If you keep very valuable possessions in your home or live in an isolated area, investigate the benefits of an alarm system. Be sure to check the company's references. Find an unpredictable place to hide valuable items, like a movable floorboard, under logs in a woodbox, or among cleaning supplies under the sink. Store little-used items like a coin collection or stock certificates in a safe deposit box.

Compile an inventory, using photos or videotape if possible. Record serial numbers and all other identifying information.

If you notice anything suspicious in your area, call the police immediately.

Exchange work and vacation schedules with a neighbor you trust so you can keep an eye on each other's homes.

Never tell a stranger or an individual you don't trust that a neighbor lives alone, is ill, or is not at home.

## Take Action

Call your local police or sheriff to see if they conduct home security surveys. This is a free service.

Teach your children safety rules about answering the phone and the door, and how to get out of the house if there is a fire.

Join or start a [Neighborhood Watch](#).